

Economists are predicting that this past holiday season is going to be the last big buying spree for consumers for awhile. Graph and chart handicappers claim that the new year is going to be grim for the retail market.

Due to recession fears and credit curbs, furniture and home appliances are already depressed on some parts of the country. It seems that old gals who were planning on buying stereo sets with micro-hair dryers and electronic nail buffs in the strength of a thumb print on a credit voucher were changing their minds when faced by the limit of using hard coin.

Credit card limits and other restrictions, I read, were sending the paper highrollers back to shelter. Don't misunderstand, I am not grieving about Sears closing or J. C. Penney having a black Thursday. My only concern was that the jugkeepers sponsoring the hollow horn and woolie industry might catch the same fever from their colleagues in the installment loan departments.

Bankers, pawnbrokers and finance companies, in my opinion, share the same dreams and the same nightmares. Somewhere in my thinking, I got to believing that the money loaned on a 1965 Fairland Ford was connected to the backup cash against a 1978 heifer calf. To me, borrowed money is just borrowed money. Once a banker starts cutting his cigars in half to make them last longer, everybody is going to hurt. What's bad news for the shippers in Liverpool is eventually a tragedy for the herders in the Shortgrass Country.

I'd finish my Christmas shopping before I was aware of the news of the last spending spree. Shoppers in the stores I visited didn't look restrained. Ladies hobbled down the aisles like they were experiencing physical impairments. I saw kids balk and throw fits in the floors, but nearly anyone being dragged across miles and miles of tile and concrete in a snow suit will finally break down. As always is true of the holidays, men were standing around, shifting their weight and fighting off gastric attacks from training

on whipped cream and brandied peaches. Sure, folks were draggy, but they weren't cooling the cash registers one bit.

Nothing was cheap. Socks and handkerchiefs were way up over last year, I bought Child Who Sits in the Sun a flashy bar of soap tied on a bright cord. I thought the clerk was joking charging a dollar six bits for the deal. She knew I was too pressed for time to bargain, or I'd have shown that Yuletide mercenary a trick or two.

It'll be a sight to see when sales persons have to leave their stools to make a thousand dollar deal. Keep a watch on the bankers and the money market. Life's blood sure do;t come from turnips. You know where we get ours.